

# Silent no more

## 'Silent Spring' author has connections to Duxbury

By JUSTIN GRAEBER, CLIPPER EDITOR  
JUSTIN@DUXBURYCLIPPER.COM

Several years ago, the theme of the 4th of July parade was "Hats Off to American Heroes," and Sustainable Duxbury chose to focus on environmentalist Rachel Carson, author of the seminal "Silent Spring." Judi Vose, then vice chairwoman of Sustainable Duxbury, was intrigued by Carson's connections to her hometown, and has been on the writer's trail ever since.

Vose and her husband Terry recently purchased a property on Powder Point that was the home of Olga Owens Huckins, a friend of Carson's.

Vose has always been interested in environmental issues, she said she was turned on to the cause by her daughter.

"We were having a political discussion, and she said we don't have to worry about wars, we're going to be out of water," Vose said.

Carson wrote "Silent Spring" in 1962 (it was serialized in the New Yorker magazine) and the book led to the federal government's banning of the pesticide DDT ten years later. The book is credited by some with kick-starting the environmental movement in this country.

In the introduction to "Silent Spring" (Vose owns a first edition), Carson says that a letter from Huckins describing birds, falling dead out of trees near a set of ponds after an aerial spraying of DDT, motivated her to pursue the project.

"I then realized I must write this book," Carson says in the introduction.

"Olga Owens Huckins said she merely lit the match to the flame," Vose said.

The ponds described in the letter are on the property the Voses recently purchased.



Judi Vose is exploring famed environmentalist Rachel Carson's connections to the town of Duxbury. Vose is pictured here with a display she curated at the Duxbury Free Library, showing writings by and about Carson.

"Somebody came up to us and said they're probably going to tear it down," she said. "We wanted to save it from development."

The home was recently featured on the Newcomers' Club spring house tour.

Vose recently found an article in the Mass. Audubon Society's magazine that references Carson visiting the Huckins property. Former Duxbury Town Historian Kathy Pillsbury has helped her compile some of Huckins' letters. She has also worked with Linda Lear, Carson's biographer and the head archivist for Carson at Connecticut College.

"She's been helpful," Vose said. Lear has been particularly keen to learn more about Carson's Duxbury connections.

Asked why she is so passionate about environmental issues, Vose said the answer is simple.

"I just love nature," she said. "Everybody that's worked before to save nature ... I just want to do my part."

2012 is the anniversary of the publication of "Silent Spring." Vose said the Duxbury Free Library and Westwinds Bookshop are working on setting up come events, and there

will also be celebrations at Connecticut College.

Vose said that Carson's message has only gotten more important since the publication of her most famous book.

"She was warning us back then and we're still not listening," Vose said. "We still have more chemicals in our life that have grown exponentially."